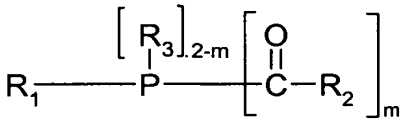
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of acylphosphines of formula (I)



(I),

wherein

m is 1 or 2;

R_1 is C_1-C_{18} alkyl, C_2-C_{18} alkyl which is interrupted by one or several non-successive O atoms, phenyl substituted C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_2-C_8 alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, C_5-C_{12} cycloalkyl or a 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N containing heterocyclic ring, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, C_5-C_{12} cycloalkyl or the 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C_1-C_8 alkyl, C_1-C_8 alkylthio and/or C_1-C_8 alkoxy;

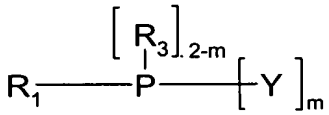
R_2 is C_1-C_{18} alkyl, C_3-C_{12} cycloalkyl, C_2-C_{18} alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl or a 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl or 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N-containing heterocyclic ring being unsubstituted or substituted by one to four C_1-C_8 alkyl, C_1-C_8 alkoxy, C_1-C_8 alkylthio and/or halogen;

R_3 is C_1-C_{18} alkyl, C_2-C_{18} alkyl which is interrupted by one or several non-successive O atoms; phenyl substituted C_1-C_4 alkyl, C_2-C_8 alkenyl, phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, C_5-C_{12}-cycloalkyl or a 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N containing heterocyclic ring, the radicals phenyl, naphthyl, biphenyl, C_5-C_{12} cycloalkyl or the 5- or 6-membered O-, S- or N-

containing heterocyclic ring being unsubstituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C_1-C_{18} alkyl, C_1-C_8 alkylthio and/or C_1-C_8 alkoxy;

[[by]] comprising

(1) reacting organic phosphorus halides of formula (II)



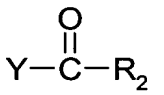
(II),

wherein R_1, R_3 and m have the meaning cited above;

and Y is Br or CI,

with sodium in a solvent in the presence of an activator, wherein sodium is pre-sent in the form of a dispersion of sodium particles having a mean particle size of $\leq$500 μm in the solvent,

(2) subsequent reaction with acid halides of formula (III)



(III),

wherein R_2 and Y have the meaning cited above;

which process is carried out without isolation of the intermediates.

Claim 2 (Original): The process according to claim 1, wherein R_1, R_2 and R_3 are independently from each other phenyl, naphthyl and biphenyl, being unsubtituted or substituted by one to five halogen, C_1-C_8 alky and/or C_1-C_8 alkoxy.

Claim 3 (Original): The process according to claim 2, wherein R_1 and R_3 are phenyl and R_2 is 2,4,6-trimethylphenyl.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, ~~and/or~~ n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~, wherein the ~~alkali metal~~ sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): ~~A process~~ The process according to claim 1 ~~to any one of claims 1 to 5~~, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the ~~alkali metal~~ sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 2, and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 1.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~A process~~ The process according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium ~~an alkali metal~~ is carried out ~~in the~~ at a temperature ~~range~~ of from -20° to +160°C.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): ~~A process~~ The process according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~, wherein the reaction (2) ~~of the metallised phosphine with the acid chloride (III)~~ is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to +120°C.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): ~~A process~~ The process according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, wherein ~~the reaction steps~~ (1) and (2) are carried out in toluene, ~~or~~ ethyl benzene, or a combination thereof, as solvent.

Claim 10 (New): The process according to claim 2, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim11 (New): The process according to claim 3, wherein the activator is chlorobenzene, n-butanol, or a combination thereof.

Claim 12 (New): The process according to claim 2, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 13 (New): The process according to claim 3, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 14 (New): The process according to claim 4, wherein the sodium is dispersed in the solvent by means of a high speed turbine stirrer.

Claim 15 (New): The process according to claim 2, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 2, and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 1.

Claim 16 (New): The process according to claim 3, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 2, and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 1.

Claim 17 (New): The process according to claim 4, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 2, and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 1.

Claim 18 (New): The process according to claim 5, wherein from 4 to 8 atom equivalents of the sodium are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 2, and 2 to 4 atom equivalents of the alkali metal are used for the preparation of compounds of formula (I), wherein m is 1.

Claim 19 (New): The process according to claim 2, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to +160°C.

Claim 20 (New): The process according to claim 3, wherein the reaction (1) of the organic phosphorus halides (II) with the sodium is carried out at a temperature of from -20° to +160°C.